

Connecticut Songsmith

Newsletter of the Connecticut
Songwriters Association



CSA is an educational, non-profit organization dedicated to
improving the art and craft of original musical and lyrical composition.
Serving music's artisans and craftsmen since 1979.



March 2009
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Combining Arts,
Education, and
Community Outreach

1979 - 2009 : 30 Years of Combining Arts, Education, and Community Outreach

CREATING YOUR BRAND-- part 1 of 2 Tuesday March 17, Glastonbury YMCA

How to Successfully Brand Yourself and Your Songs

One of the biggest challenges facing songwriters is finding the right balance between being familiar and being different; between the tried and true and your pride in what's new. How do you make your name and your songs become as familiar as McDonald's, Coke, and Starbucks? How can you use the Von Restorff Effect to your advantage in a world where competition for people's attention is fierce. Without attention, your music never gets the opportunity to present itself on its own merits.

The March CSA meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 17, 7:15pm at the Glastonbury YMCA. (*directions on page 2*) This workshop will be the first of a two-part series -- the second part will be held in June with the professional Public Relations firm, Skye Communications, who works with major clients.

At this meeting, we will discuss the key elements of creating and promoting a musical brand, and in June, you'll get to work with PR professionals to get your materials in top shape.

This meeting is free to members, \$5 for non-members. See you there, and bring a friend!

CRITIQUE SESSIONS

Following the program, as time permits, there will be a critique session. To participate in the critique session, members may bring a song on CD (or do it live), with 20 copies of typed lyric sheets, and receive constructive feedback. Critique sessions are a good forum for works in progress or rough demos. For best feedback, note on your lyric sheets the intended genre and audience for your song, and what your goals are (i.e. picked up by a commercial artist, self-produce, etc.). The programs at most CSA monthly meetings are free to members, \$5 to non-members, applicable toward membership if you join within 30 days. Members are encouraged to bring a friend who might be interested in what CSA offers. .

SNOW ADVISORY: In the event of snow, please check the CSA website for up-to-date info on meeting status.

CSA EVENT CALENDAR (for complete listing see www.ctsongs.com)

- Mar 17 - CSA Meeting - Glastonbury
- Mar 27-28 Singer-Songwriter Conference, Cape May NJ
- Apr 11 - Annual C SA Collaboration Workshop - Mystic
- May 09 Spring Pro Workshop - Marci Geller from NYC
- Jun 09 CSA Meeting - Glastonbury YMCA. Workshop with Skye Communications PR Firm.
- Jun 14 CSA Summer Showcase/Picnic - JB Williams Park
- Jul 06 - CSA Meeting - Wesleyan Univ.
- Aug 30 CSA Summer Showcase/Picnic - JB Williams Park
- Sep CSA Meeting - Glastonbury YMCA
- Oct CSA Meeting- Workshop
- Oct 3 CSA Day of Praise Collaborative Performance
- Nov 09 CSA Meeting - Wesleyan Univ.
- Dec 5 13th Annual LUNCH Holiday Show - Stonington
- Dec TBA

Guiding Songs Along the Path from Creation to Realization to Proliferation

COMBINING ARTS, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR 30 YEARS

DIRECTIONS TO MEETING LOCATION

How to
Get There!

Directions to Glastonbury YMCA : From I-91 going north or south: Take Exit 25 over the CT River onto Route 3 to Glastonbury. Bear right onto Route 2 towards Norwich. Take Exit 8 (Hebron Av.) off Route 2 and go right at the late onto Hebron Av. Go right at the next light which is New London Turnpike. Take first left (Welles St.) and a quick right into the Fox Run Mall. Go straight, park anywhere and look for CSA signs near People's Bank.

From I-84 east or west: Take Exit 55 onto Route 2 towards Glastonbury to Exit 8. See above.

From Norwich / New London area: Take Route 2 to Exit 8 in Glastonbury and go right and a quick left onto Hebron Av. Go 2 lights to New London Tpke. See above

GET A TAX DEDUCTION FOR YOUR OLD STUFF !

If you have any old music or office equipment lying around or just old "stuff" that you don't need, consider donating it to CSA and you'll get a generous tax deduction !

CSA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all items donated to us can be deducted at their maximum fair market value. We have helped many folks get nice deductions for their old items, which certainly can be useful to us either in our regular CSA programs or our community outreach programs through LUNCH.

We can use any office equipment and supplies, old computers, any type of music and studio equipment, and any type of item that could be used for auction or raffle. We'll provide a tax receipt that will give you the best possible tax-deduction.

If you have anything that you might like to donate, contact Bill Pere at bill@billpere.com

HAVE YOU GOTTEN A FRIEND TO JOIN CSA YET ? Make it a goal for 2009 to get at least one new person to become part of the CSA community ! **We need your help to spread the word !**

NEED A BARCODE UPC symbol for your CD ?



If you want to sell your CD's through retail outlets or through online stores like CD Baby or Amazon, a barcoded UPC is required. CSA can provide a unique number for your product that meets CD retailing requirements. No one else would have your UPC number (you need a different number for each different product you have). For a one time cost of \$20 per UPC, CSA will give you a number and a barcode (or you can use the number to make your own barcode). To obtain a barcode, send \$20 per UPC and your e-mail address to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355. You will receive your UPC via e-mail, or by regular mail if you prefer.

COMING UP

APRIL - CSA COLLABORATION WORKSHOP. Register now. Page 4

MAY - CSA PRO WORKSHOP with Marci Geller. Register Now.

JUNE - CSA Workshop with Skye Communications PR Firm.

CALLING ALL WRITERS

ANNOUNCING THE CSA 2009 COMPILATIONS

Get your songs in by October 31, 2009 to insure eligibility! *(after 10/31, contact us for status)*

CSA Compilation CDs have received radio airplay and are displayed at national conferences, and the digital downloads pay artist royalties.

- 1: SONGS of SOCIAL RELEVANCE** - We're continuing to collect songs that address an issue of social importance -- hunger, homelessness, the environment, substance abuse, global warming..... This is your chance to speak out and be heard. TIP: Don't just write a song that preaches -- Make your point by showing it, not telling it.
- 2: SPIRITUAL/INSPIRATIONAL SONGS** - Our 3rd collection in this very popular series. See our previous Spiritual/Inspirational collections "Share the Journey" and "Along the Road" for examples of songs that fit this category.
- 3: HOLIDAY SONGS** - One of the favorite categories -- CSA has released four great holiday collections. The holidays keep coming, and so do the songs!
- 4: GOOD OL' COUNTRY SONGS!** - Always popular, and there is no lack of good quality country songs in CSA. NOTE: Because of the many great CSA country songs, submission is not a guarantee of inclusion.

GUIDELINES

- At least one writer must be a current CSA member
- All songs must be professionally produced, up to 'radio-ready' standards.
- Social Relevance songs must address a specific topic and social issue, such as hunger, homelessness, substance abuse, the environment, global warming, etc...
- Spiritual Inspirational songs must be appropriate to the category. See examples on the previous CSA Compilations "Share the Journey" and "Along the Road".
- Songs for the Humorous/Novelty compilation must be appropriate for the theme of the collection. Songs should feature unusual topics, tongue-in-cheek lyrics designed to bring a smile to the listener, or to just present a totally whimsical idea or story.

Please specify for which CD Collection you are submitting.

- Any musical style is okay
- Submission is NOT a guarantee of acceptance. Songs will be selected based on :
 - Appropriateness to the theme
 - Song Crafting
 - Production Quality (must be professionally recorded and radio-ready)
 - Available space on the CD (if there are more acceptable submissions than can fit on the CD, those submitted earlier and those of shorter length will be given greater consideration.)
- Songs must not violate the terms of any third-party agreement (e.g. with a publisher). Unsigned songs are preferred. If a song is under contract to a publisher, a signed release from the publisher must be provided.
- Songs may not have been included on any previous CSA CD Compilation
- Submissions will not be returned.
- At CSA discretion, songs from the compilations may be made available for digital downloads, with royalties paid to the writers.

TO SUBMIT, PLEASE SEND THE FOLLOWING:

- A recording of the song on CD, suitable for duplication (put your name and contact info on the CD)
- Clearly indicate the TIME of the track, in minutes: seconds
- A lyric sheet (put your name and contact info on the lyric sheet)
- A signed release form, printed out from the CSA web site (www.ctsongs.com)
- A non-refundable one-time \$10 per song processing fee payable to CSA.
If you want your complementary copy to be mailed to you, please include \$2 for postage.
(there are no additional costs, whether a song is accepted for inclusion or not)

Send your recording, lyric sheet, release form, and \$10 (+ \$2 postage) to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355.

IF YOU HAVE A SONG which is not yet fully produced and you want to know if it acceptable for consideration before doing the production, you may bring it to a CSA critique session

CSA COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

**1:00pm - 5:00pm at the Mystic Chamber of Commerce
Conference Room. 14 Holmes St, Mystic**

When you look at the credits for a song on almost any CD you often see more than one name listed as the writer. Why is this? It takes multiple dimensions to write an effective song. Some folks can do it all by themselves, but for many, working with a collaborator is a great way to create songs that are better than either could produce alone. These multiple dimensions, and techniques for collaboration have been presented at by Bill Pere at several major music conferences, and have been published as a featured article in the Songwriters Market book.

In addition to all the creative aspects of collaboration, the business aspects of working with others add another layer of complexity to the issues of ownership, copyright, credit, publishing, and royalties.

The workshop will include:

- Determining if you would benefit from collaboration
- Considerations for finding and working with collaborators
- The differences between creative and performance collaboration
- The business considerations of collaboration
- Examples of successful results from collaborations within and outside of CSA

And then will actually do some hands-on collaborative writing. We'll work in groups, write a song, and share it with the group. This process, a highlight of several national music conferences, has yielded some very good results with songs fully produced and released. Many folks doing this for the first time have called it an eye-opening experience, and very valuable -- as well as being fun!

SPACE IS LIMITED AND REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. You may register in advance (\$8) or at the door (\$10). Send your registration check to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355.

Directions to Mystic Chamber of Commerce Conference Room (14 Holmes St) for the COLLABORATION WORKSHOP: Coming North on I-95, take Exit 89. Go right off the Exit onto Allyn St. Go about 2 miles and come to a light and the intersection of Rt 1. Turn left onto Rt 1 and go a short way to the 5-way intersection overlooking Main St, Mystic. Proceed down the Main Street of Mystic, across the drawbridge, to the flagpole (Holmes St). Turn left at the flagpole onto Holmes. Pass a few storefronts and you'll see a red brick building, #14 Holmes St. To park, turn right just before the brick building onto Church St, and park in the lot behind the brick building. The entrance for the Chamber of Commerce is at the far right as you face the rear of the building. Go down the corridor. The room is on the right. FREE Coffee and snacks. Workshop space is limited, so advance registration is recommended. The workshop registration, which includes free concert admission, is \$10. You can register in advance by sending \$10 payable to CSA to CSA, PO Box 511, Mystic CT 06355.

THE UN-COMFORT ZONE with Robert Wilson

Keeping The Ball Rolling

I know an advertising agency owner who never fully takes a vacation. He takes his family to fairly exotic locations, but never so alien that they are outside the reach of modern communication. In other words, he is never further than a cell phone call or email away. He checks in with the office several times a day – much to the chagrin of his family who want him to be fully engaged in the holiday at hand. So, he ends up sneaking off under the guise of visiting the restroom, or going to the bar for a cocktail, in order to connect with his staff, a client or a prospect. His wife and kids aren't fooled; they just sigh and accept the inevitable. I used to think he was a control freak – someone who couldn't let go and let someone else take over – until I came to understand the concept of Momentum.

In science, Momentum is equal to Mass times Velocity. Or just think of Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* running as fast as he can out of the tunnel while that huge stone ball rolls faster and faster after him. In business, Momentum is the point at which success begins to come easily. Business veterans jokingly refer to it as having, “paid my dues.” In short, Momentum is an accumulation of acquired knowledge, skill, experience and connections. And, those who understand it... also know it can be fragile and easily lost.

Sales professionals who have achieved Momentum will tell you that you must pursue a number of activities to generate sales leads: phone calls, emails, sales letters, networking events, etc. You keep it up building dozens, then hundreds of leads at a time. Then to convert those leads to sales you keep following up on each of them in a timely fashion. Meanwhile, you are still maintaining all the activities that continue to generate leads. So between generating leads, following up on leads, then turning leads into sales, you begin to feel like the guy in the circus who spins plates on top of poles – rushing from one plate to the next to keep them spinning.

No wonder these folks hate to take vacations – it breaks the Momentum they've spent months or years creating and they know it takes time to get it going again.

Years ago when I first started giving speeches, a seasoned professional speaker advised me, “It took me ten years to quit sweating cash flow, but even so, it is still all about non-stop marketing.” In other words: maintaining Momentum.

For a growing company, Momentum is the point where you have done enough advertising, marketing, public relations, networking, customer service, and so forth that business begins to flow. It is the point where you are garnering the precious and often elusive *word-of-mouth* referrals. Momentum is about building a reputation. Acquiring it, however, doesn't mean you can taper off on your efforts... but it does mean that your efforts will become easier.

The best thing about Momentum is that once you get it, motivation becomes self-perpetuating. Momentum is energizing. It keeps you on your toes. And, the rewards come quickly and regularly.

I have found this to true in all pursuits. Even when I am writing fiction there is always a certain point in a novel that it takes on a life of its own and demands my daily attention, energy and focus until it is complete. Unfortunately, nothing quite puts the brakes on Momentum like finishing a book, or completing any other major task. The trick to avoid losing that Momentum is to begin another book or another task before you complete the first one. Then you just shift your energy over to the next project that is already under way.

SONGCRAFTERS COLORING BOOK

by Bill Pere

Writing in the Key of “W”

One of the most difficult part of songwriting is coming up with a really good lyric...one that communicates what you want to say in a new and memorable way and which reaches and touches a diversity of listeners. Much of the difficulty is finding the balance between specificity and blandness; between imagery and vagueness. It is not easy to be specific yet colorful, and to get a clear message across memorably in three minutes. Cleverness with words, to produce phonetic activity is important, but is not enough by itself. It takes more than that to provide the substance. There are some general principles which, if followed, can make you more aware of the clarity of your lyric. One key principle is “writing in the key of “W”. When you think you are done with a lyric, ask these things:

Who, What, When, Where, Why, hoW.... By the end of your lyric, have all of these things been conveyed clearly to a listener? **Who** is singing? To whom are they singing? Are any third parties being referred to? **What** is happening? **What** does each verb and each noun refer to? **When** is the action occurring (day/night/present/past/future/what century)? **Where** is this taking place (in a home, in a bar, in Cleveland, in my mind, underwater)? **Why** are the characters saying and doing what they do? **Why** do they feel as they do? **Why** are they motivated to take those actions? **How** did things get to be this way? **How** will they be resolved? **How** does each character feel?

If you do not know the answer to any of these questions, you may have to do some re-thinking about your lyric. A study by Harvard psychology professor Daniel Gilbert, described in his book "Stumbling on Happiness" (*Vintage Books 2007, ISBN 1400077427*). Quite simply it showed that once a question is raised in a person's mind, they can't stand not knowing the answer. Don't underestimate the power of curiosity. There are many ways to use it to your advantage in marketing and promotion, but in the crafting of a song, if your lyrics raise a question, provide the answer or least a fair set of clues to the answer. Don't leave the listener hanging.

It is perfectly reasonable to conclude that for a particular lyric, it doesn't matter at all to know where it is happening or when it is happening. However, that is not the same as not knowing the answer. If you consciously conclude that some of the above are not critical to your message, then the answer is “any time” or “anywhere”. The thing to avoid at all costs is creating confusion by not being specific when it does matter, or by leading the listener to believe that it matters.

As an exercise for yourself, look at some of your lyrics and see how many of the W's can you answer in the first verse? Here's an example from the first verse of a song about P.T. Barnum, written as a grade-school educational aid:

<i>Town of Bridgeport, nineteenth century time</i>	(where and when)
<i>Phineas T. Barnum was making the headlines</i>	(who and what)
<i>With the voice of Jenny Lind, and General Tom Thumb</i>	(How he was making headlines)
<i>He'd set up the events and watch the crowds of people come"</i>	(What he did, and what resulted)

This is an example of straight expository writing... a series of facts. Very specific, but not necessarily colorful or exciting. However, this kind of writing has its place when you look at TV theme songs (Gilligan's Island, Beverly Hillbillies, Brady Bunch ... all the facts about the premise of the show are there in less than two minutes). Let's have a look at another example from Harry Chapin's "Dance Band on the Titanic"

*"Mama stood cryin' by the dockside
She said 'Please son, don't take this trip'
I said 'Momma, sweet Momma, don't you worry none,
Even God couldn't sink this ship'..."*

What do we know from just these four lines? A mother is standing at the dock as her son is about to depart on a ship. She is worried. He loves her, and he is confident about the success of his upcoming trip. Thus we know who (mother and son), where (dockside), when (departure time), and how they feel.

The effectiveness of lyrics like these come not only from the specificity of the W's, but also because it employs another of the important principles of a good lyric... "Show it, don't tell it!" To say "He smiled" is specific, but not colorful. To say "The corners of his mouth were looking up" conveys the same information by showing an action." "I'm lonely" can become "the bed's too big without you"; "I talk on the phone a lot" can become "This phone's growing into my ear". The next lines of the above, instead of saying "the ship left" say "the whistle blew, they turned the screws, it churned the water into foam..."

A great deal of information can be conveyed in the first few lines of a song, freeing up the rest of your valuable syllable-space for developing your ideas or painting your images. Consider this opening couplet:

*"I slip out the back door in the dead heat of summer
The city streets swelter, the sweat turns to steam..."*

What do we know? Where (city) and When (summer), we know it's very hot, and that the singer (Who) is engaged in a secretive activity. Here's another:

*"Hot August night, and the trees hanging down and the grass on the ground smellin sweet
Move up the road to the outside of town and the sound of that good gospel beat"*

What do we know? In these Neil Diamond lines, (which also contain 6 rhymes, assonance, and alliteration), we know When (August, night), Where (edge of the road leading out of the town), What is going on (gospel music), and How the air smells.

This type of lyric writing is both journalistic and cinematic, like documenting and describing the world through movie cameras where the lenses can zoom in and out and scenes can pan and cut between locations and characters, providing all the relevant information. It is the art of using words to reach the visual centers of the listener's mind. And considering how many people rent videos, go to movies, and watch TV, it makes for effective lyric writing.

Finally, how about this amazing bit of writing from the first verse James Taylor's "Millworker":

*My grandpa was a sailor, blew in off the water
My father was a farmer, and I, his only daughter
I married a millworking man from Massachusetts
Who died from too much whiskey and left me these three faces to feed.*

In this brief opening to the song, we meet *seven people across four generations!* We know their occupations and their relationships to each other. We know who is singing the song (the daughter), that she is widowed, how her husband died, and her current situation. With all that rich information in the opening lines of the song, the writer not only has the listener's attention, but now has the luxury of the entire rest of the song to use valuable syllable real-estate for imagery and character development.

Thinking of your songs visually is a powerful means of developing effective lyrics. Sometimes, you can "see" the whole song before you even have any words, and your lyrics can then be a matter of describing what you "see". If you can't form a picture, go back and look at every noun in your lyric. How many of them are concrete things you can see and touch (moon, chair, table, book, beer), and how many are intangible (happiness, loneliness, truth, beauty). If there are no concrete reference in your lyric, it will be impossible for you or a listener to form a picture, and you cannot answer the W's. I have seen lyrics presented at workshops that contain 20-30 nouns, but not one single concrete reference, and the typical audience feedback is that they are "confused". Specificity takes practice, but can yield big rewards in the way you touch your listeners.

Bill Pere was named one of the "Top 50 Innovators, Groundbreakers, and Guiding Lights of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine, December 2008. He is a recording artist, award winning songwriter, performer, and educator, best known for his superbly crafted lyrics, with lasting impact. Bill has released 15 CD's, teaches songwriting workshops across the U.S. and serves as President of the Connecticut Songwriters Association. Bill is an Official Connecticut State Troubadour, and is the Founder and Executive Director of the LUNCH Ensemble (www.lunchensemble.com).

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The complete 300-page "Songcrafters' Coloring Book: The Essential Guide to Effective and Successful Songwriting", will be released in 2009.

SONG CRITIQUES Members may bring a song or lyric on cassette to the monthly meeting for critiquing by fellow members. Please bring 30-40 copies of typed lyric sheet. Out-of-State members may have their songs or lyrics critiqued by sending one submission with 40 typed copies of lyrics to: CSA, 51 Hillcrest Ave, Watertown, CT 06795. Include a double stamped return envelope. Members are encouraged to write their comments on the sheets which can provide valuable feedback to the writer(s). Comments by the group will be recorded at the end of your song (do not remove the record-protect tabs from the cassette). Please note that since critiquing is designed to give constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement, songs which are meant only to be shared for self expression (as opposed to critiqued for improvement) should not be submitted. These can be presented in song-sharing opportunities.

FREE ACCESS to CT SONGS CAFE -- The CSA online area for posting notices, getting your electronic newsletter, and other features.

Questions about CSA Programs? Need To check your Membership status? Have a news item to submit? Want to volunteer for a project? Seeking a collaborator? Change of Address? It's easy to contact CSA.

General Info: www.ctsongs.com E-mail: info@ctsongs.com

Change of Address, Newsletter, Membership, Special Projects:
 CSA membership PO Box 511 Mystic CT 06355
Phone: 860-572-9285 **Fax:** 860-572-6091
E-Mail: info@ctsongwriters.com

CSA on the Web: www.ctsongs.com

• COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES AND NETWORKING
 CSA provides opportunities to meet collaborators and providers of various music services. Make sure you're listed on our web site.

• SONG SCREENING : CSA helps its members get well-crafted songs targeted to their best potential market. Songs are screened at meetings 2-3 times a year, or by mail. Selected songs are eligible for inclusion on CSA cassette albums which are often given to industry pros. Songs submitted for screening must have been presented at a prior critique session. (exceptions on a case-by-case basis) For details, contact Wayne Gamache, 203-265-6518 in Wallingford

• PARTICIPATION IN CSA MARKETING OUTLETS AND DISTRIBUTION : Recordings by CSA members may be made available to retail outlets, radio stations, or Internet Distribution channels.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES: The LUNCH Program offers opportunities to be involved in the production and performance of benefit shows to address hunger and poverty in Connecticut. Contact Bill Pere, 860-572-9285 for details.

CSA REGISTRATION FORM FOR NEW MEMBERS (This form not valid for membership renewals)

NAME _____

ADDRESS: _____

E_MAIL (required for newsletter) _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____ BIRTH DATE _____

PHONE: (____) _____ OCCUPATION: _____

CHECK WHERE APPROPRIATE Songwriter Lyricist Vocalist
 Composer Musician Patron Other: _____

- Membership Categories**
 (outside the U.S., please add \$10 to all categories)
 (All memberships include free electronic Newsletter Subscription. **For a paper copy by mail, add \$10 per year**)
- 1 year New Membership \$40
 - 2 year New Membership \$70 (save \$10)
 - 3 year New Membership \$99 (save \$21)
 - Full Time Student \$35/yr
 - Senior Citizen \$35/yr
 - Lifetime \$400 one time total
 - e-Newsletter Subscription only (\$25/yr. 12 issues)

Members receive a free 1 year subscription to the monthly newsletter *Connecticut Songsmith*, free or discounted admission to monthly meetings and critique sessions, participation in the Song Share Sessions, Song Screening Services, eligibility for inclusion on Compilation CDs, free classified ads, and discounts on goods and services.

Enclosed is my check or money order to CSA for \$ _____.

Name on Credit Card: _____

Credit Card Number : Visa Mastercard Expiration /




Mail to:
CSA Membership
PO Box 511
Mystic CT 06355

E-Mail: info@ctsongs.com

Connecticut Songwriters Association
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*Serving Music's Artisans
 and Craftsmen Since 1979*